



Tourism Numbers at All Time High

Montana hosted a record 9.46 million visitors in 1999, according to a preliminary report from the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana. This is up 2 percent from 1998.

"More of our visitors got off the interstate highway and traveled our secondary roadways."

"We had projected a 2-3 percent increase in nonresident visitation so we feel that we are right on target," says Travel Montana Director, Matthew Cohn. "One trend that was found this year was that more of our visitors got off the interstate highway and traveled our secondary roadways." Cohn adds that one of the goals at Travel Montana is to help visitors learn more about the cultural attractions and events across the state so they will stay longer and spend more money in many of the state's rural communities.

During 1999, nonresident visitors spent \$1.56 billion on lodging, food, shopping, transportation and gasoline, directly supporting 27,600 jobs. From 1991 to 1999, the number of nonresident visitors to the state increased from 7.5 million to 9.46 million.

Gearing Up for M2K: Montana Millennium

2000 Governor's Tourism Conference Registration

Register now for the Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation planned at the Big Sky Ski & Summer

Resort April 10-11, 2000. You can register by calling RMS Management Services, 406-443-1160, or by downloading the registra-



tion form from Travel Montana's Intranet site, travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference and mailing it to RMS.

A registration brochure, complete with an agenda and speaker summary, will be mailed out in mid-February. The "early bird" registration fee of \$120 is available through March 23. The fee will increase to \$140 March 24-April 4, with a \$160 fee after April 4.

The Big Sky Ski & Summer Resort will be offering discount lift tickets and ski rental packages for those registered for the conference. They welcome everyone to come early and stay late to enjoy all the winter recreation Big Sky has to offer. Contact Big Sky at 800-548-4486.

Exhibitor/Sponsor Opportunities

There is still time to reserve your space for an exhibitor booth and/or to sign up to be a sponsor for the M2K festivities. A February 15 deadline has been set. For more information

on exhibitor/sponsor opportunities contact Travel Montana's Consumer Marketing Manager, Suzanne Elfstrom at 406-444-2654, 800-548-3390 ext. #2 outside Montana or e-mail: suzanne@visitmt.com

And the Winners Are...

It's time to nominate worthy Montanans and communities for the Tourism Person of the Year and Tourism Community of the Year awards. The awards will be presented by Governor Marc Racicot at the Governor's Conference.

For nomination forms, contact Travel Montana, 406-444-2654 or travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference. Nominations must be submitted by March 15 to Travel Montana, Box 200533, Helena, MT 59620-0533.

3rd Quarter Bed Tax Numbers

As of press time, Travel Montana does not have the final "bed tax" collections from July-September, 1999. The Department of Revenue, the agency responsible for collecting the bed tax dollars, is working on compiling the data.

According to Travel Montana Director Matthew Cohn, preliminary numbers indicate that the summer quarter was strong in most areas of the state and future collection reports should reflect this. Travel Montana will distribute the 3rd quarter figures as soon as they are released.

TAC Welcomes Two New Members

Governor Marc Racicot has appointed R.J. Young and Rick McCamley to the state's Tourism Advisory Council (TAC). R.J. is the Tourism Coordinator for the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes on the Fort Peck Reservation in northeast Montana and Rick from Whitefish, is the President of the Montana Innkeepers Association.

Film Office Chugging Along

The Montana Film Office is rolling out a comprehensive marketing campaign to introduce the new Virginia City/Nevada City steam engine/locomotive to a targeted group of producers, directors, location managers and production designers. The campaign includes advertisements that will appear in production trade magazines and papers, direct mail postcards and a fulfillment piece that includes a small, whistling train engine. The film office is providing a booth for the Heritage Commission at the Locations 2000 Trade Show in Los Angeles, February 25-27. Film Office Manager Lonie Stimac explains that this show is a wonderful opportunity for the Heritage Commission to provide information on the train to more than 3,000 Hollywood visitors.

Travel Montana Cruises in 1999

A record 1.3 million visitors surfed Travel Montana's consumer websites in 1999. According to Consumer Marketing Manager, Suzanne Elfstrom, this is a 100 percent increase from 1998, which hosted 643,000 users.

Elfstrom explains that all of Travel Montana's specialty sites experienced amazing user increases. For example, montanakids.com saw a 408 percent jump in visits with 235,000 users logging on in 1999 compared to

46,000 in 1998. "A lot of kids were introduced to the site because of the 'Montana kids Treasure Hunt' promotion where we gave away a trip for four to Montana," says Elfstrom. "We got an astounding number of hits from this first time promotion and we plan to do it again in 2000." The Lewis and Clark site, lewisandclark.state.mt.us, grew 275 percent from 18,000 users in 1998 to 68,000 in 1999.

What's Ahead on the Web

Travel Montana's Electronic Media Staff has some exciting changes in store for visitmt.com in 2000. The following are some highlights.

- A new watchable wildlife site, wildlife.visitmt.com, will feature information on where and how to safely view wildlife while protecting the environment, and the best species to observe in the state.

- The homepage will offer two direct links. A reservation link to WorldRes.com, one of the largest online reservation services in the world, will make it easier for visitors to the state's website to book Montana lodging reservations online. The second link will give international visitors an opportunity to receive Montana traveler information in French, Italian, German, Japanese and Chinese.

- montanakids.com is getting a facelift.

Helena illustrator Peter Grosshauser, who designed the previous kids' site graphics, is provid-

ing the graphics for the new interface. Also new to montanakids.com is an entire section on Lewis and Clark.

Put a Little Culture in Your Life

A Cultural Tourism Marketing Institute is set for February 23-26 at Missoula's Holiday Inn Parkside. The three-day conference will focus on marketing and developing ideas for Montana's Cultural Tourism products and packages.

The Institute is being offered by the Missoula Cultural Council, Montana Arts Council, Travel Montana and a variety of Missoula businesses and cultural organizations.

To register or for more details, contact the Missoula Cultural Council, 406-721-9620, e-mail: mcc@bigsky.net, web: www.missoulacultural.org. The registration fee is \$65.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

February

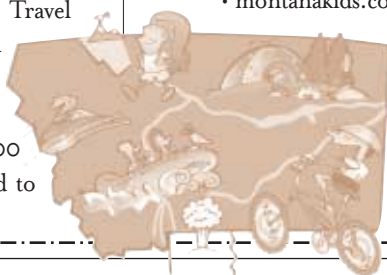
23-26 Cultural Tourism Institute, Missoula

25-27 Locations 2000 Trade Show, Los Angeles, CA

March

15 Deadline for Tourism Person and Community of the Year Awards

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to Travel Montana's Intranet site: travelmontana.state.mt.us.



Travel Montana

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